A NEW YORK NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT

The Story of Marston, the Dreamer

"So you don't like Honduras?" Stanborough asked idly.

Inspector Maurel, the experienced head of the New York detective force, shook his head slightly. A vertical line appeared on the serene forehead that customarily concealed from his closest friends the melancholy and subtle thoughts of his extremely able mind.

We were sitting together on the deck of the police boat Patrol, returning from a visit to certain catches of waterfront thieves. Maurel sometimes lets Stanborough accompany him on his more picturesque (and less important) trips here and there in Greater New York. I had gone along this particular afternoon because Stanborough had walked into my office, waved away the stenographer and the Cerberuslike office boy and dragged me forth, silencing my objections with the single remark:

"Lupton, you look pale. You need a sea voyage."

With a plodding and important noise of machinery the Patrol was coming down the North River. It was dusk. A hundred thousand tiny lights gleamed from the downtown offices, resembling stars placed in a regular and beautiful mosaic against the dark background. Maurel pointed to the east and explained:

"I never see a lighted harbor at night without recalling my first detail abroad. It was a bad failure."

We looked at him in surprise. Failure? The word does not associate itself with the general notion of his career. Stanborough, however, reverted to the former topic.

"What is it you don't like about Honduras?" he asked.

"A prejudice," Maurel murmured. "I can't explain it without telling you the story of that first detail—the one that was a failure. It is a good many years ago now. It starts right in there." He pointed to a cleft in the skyscrapers. "In a bank. And it ends in Algiers and Honduras."

"There's plenty of time to tell the story before we reach Pier 1," said Stanborough persuasively.

Maurel struck a match and lit a cigar. The flare revealed thoughtful eyes narrowed in a meditative study. As the match went out his voice said in the redoubled darkness caused by its extinction:

"Well, I will tell it."

But it was several minutes before he began to speak in low tones that just reached us above the Patrol's thumping.

"In this bank over there they had a clerk, a young fellow named Marston," he said. "It must be thirty years back. The staffs were not so large as they are now, and so Marston had a distinct personality. He was not simply clerk No. 17 in such and such a department. No. He was in a fairly important place, one of the tellers, in fact, and known to the whole force and to most of the customers of the bank.

"There was another teller named Schoon, from Marston's own country town, and the two were close friends. They had been playmates together, and there existed between them a genuine affection. A good deal like brothers—closer than some brothers. At least, Marston thought a good deal of Schoon.

"Although these two men were such good friends, there was never the slightest doubt that Schoon was a much abler bank clerk. He was cool, quick witted, reserved and exceedingly efficient. But he was also disliked. There was something chilling and speculative about his glance, and he had a sarcastic tongue when he did speak.

"Marston was entirely different. With his shy ways and pleasant smile he was popular among the other employees of the institution and with its customers, too—one of those immensely likable young chaps, absolutely trustworthy but with no great talents. In fact, as a teller, he was undoubtedly as high as he would go. For Schoon, on the other hand, the future held indefinite promise. He had apparently the head and the impervious hardness to become a man of wealth and power.

"Marston was shy, I say, a dreamer. In the back of his head lay a big longing to see something of the world. The thought of other countries enchanted this youth, who had never been further than a hundred miles from his birthplace.

"Gradually his associates became aware of his secret ambition. There did not seem much chance of his fulfilling it. But he was bound to satisfy himself some day. He explained confidentially to Schoon and a few other intimates that he was going to stint himself on vacations and save every penny he could for the great day when he should embark for six weeks of Europe, and maybe longer—two months was not impossible.

"So he did with a week off for five years and got together $500. It wouldn't have been possible on his meagre, old fashioned clerk's salary had he not been absolutely alone in the world, without kith or kin and no one to look after but himself. At length his great day came and on a fine morning in the first week of October, eighteen hundred and eighty blank, he went aboard a steamship bound from New York to Mediterranean ports—Algiers, Naples, Messina and Trieste. He had taken passage to Algiers.

All these years I've wanted to see these places.

"I went aboard the ship an hour afterward and a few minutes before she sailed. The bank officials had come down to their day's business to find Schoon and Marston both absent and currency to the value of $50,000 missing. In the confusion of the discovery it was not possible to tell who had taken the money. Some men had been sent to try to find or follow Schoon. I was packed off to trail Marston.

"As we sailed down the harbor I came out of my stateroom and went on deck. I saw Marston at the after rail, his face aglow, waving delightedly to the people on the pier. I don't suppose there was a soul there he knew, but in his mood at that moment they were all personal friends gathered to bid him good luck on the voyage of his dreams.

"There were few passengers, and anyway, it was part of my business to make Marston's acquaintance. As it was before the days of wireless no one except myself knew my real errand aboard. My orders were simple—just to stick to the young clerk first and last, chum with him and lay hold of anything I could to determine his guilt or innocence and cause his arrest and detention if anything developed to throw suspicion directly on him.

"In a very few days the clerk and I were on the friendliest terms. And it didn't take long for me to be as morally certain as a man can be of anything in this world that I was tracking an innocent man.

"Nothing might have seemed easier than simply to keep quiet and stay with him until his return. But I was young then myself, not much experienced and eager to make a success of every case I worked on. The thought of my position made me intensely uncomfortable. All nonsense, of course. And I let my anxiety on his behalf overreach.

"It seemed to me that the best service I could do him would be to fix guilt elsewhere. So I began to ask him about Schoon. I told him of the crime and of Schoon's disappearance. Stupidity! Well, you have to learn, especially in youth. I really thought he might be able to tell me something that would clinch the case against Schoon.

"But he wasn't. And the news of the theft and Schoon's disappearance gave him a tremendous shock. He asked how I had heard of it. I replied that I knew the president of the bank rather well.

"'Schoon to do a thing like that!' he exclaimed, quite white.

"He began to tell me at length of his comrade and I heard the whole history of the intimacy of those two from the days when they were youngsters in a country village. I asked him if he thought Schoon could be guilty.

"He started to say something and then stopped as if stung. And I knew that some episode, some incident, some trifle of the past had risen up before him, spectral and hideously convincing, pointing its ghostly finger at the image of the man he thought most of in the world. I don't know what it was. Something Schoon had once done or said, or something he had omitted to do—it might have been anything. But it was there. After a pause Marston steadied himself and then said thoughtfully:

"'I can't think he could have done it. Why, just because he had gone away suddenly——'

"He stopped dead short, looked at me with a faintly inquiring glance, and then with a dawning of horror and dismay he leaned forward and exclaimed in a shaking voice:

"'Why, for that matter, I went away myself. They may just as well suspect me.'

"I fancy I heard a voice say the very thing that was ringing so loudly in my own head. He too must have thought he heard this echo of deadly logic: 'They do!'

"He gazed at me steadily from a drawn white face in which there was no sign of the boyish exultation of his sailing. He said slowly:

"'I see. Aren't you here to—to—keep an eye on me?'

"How I damned my folly at that instant. I couldn't bring myself to answer his question and my very silence was a tacit affirmation of his surmise. I began finally a long, low explanation which he interrupted with the single remark:

"'I haven't said that I did not take the money.'

"I was so absolutely thunderstruck that I forgot what I was saying. It was something about his going ahead and having his holiday just as he had planned, returning on schedule and finding everything cleared up and all right. He gave his attention to this aspect of the matter now and tore its pretty semblance to pieces.

"'I am suspected and followed,' he said in steady tones. 'The facts of the theft, of my absence, of Schoon's absence, of our friendship are all known and published. Do you think that, whoever is guilty, I can ever return without having my good name clouded for all the rest of my life?'

"I protested vigorously. I was so cut up by the consequences of my own blunder, and the blunder of those others who had hurriedly sent me after him, that I did my best to make him believe that he could be entirely cleared. But I had to give it up.

"He knew better than that as well as I did. He knew he could never escape the consequences of that terrible blunder which was not, after all, merely a blunder of his fellow men but had in it the inexplicable quality of a fatality. Why should an august and merciful Heaven have permitted his departure for foreign soil to take place at that instant when it would blacken him forever? For people would always remember the theft, the suspicion thrown on him, his sailing; he would be an object of curious attention, of gossip, of rumor, of speculation, of doubt—that was it—there would be something very strange, rather doubtful ever after about that young fellow Marston.'

Was running a gambling house frequented by his fellow exiles.

"We were within a day of Algiers. He came to me in my cabin and asked me if I was going ashore. Then, before I could answer, he smiled rather painfully and said:

"'Of course you are. I am. Excuse me. The captain says that we will arrive at night, stop for an hour about 2 in the morning, long enough to take on mail and land those who are not going further.'

"I muttered that, to be sure, I should have to accompany him. He sat on the lounge under the open port with an air of extreme fatigue, as if the insoluble problem of his future conduct had worn him completely out.

"'You have only to stay with me until the finish,' he said quietly. 'That will not, perhaps be long. And the shape of it does not matter. I shall accept it in the first form in which it presents itself. I • • • you • • • please listen carefully to what I say. Schoon is a fine fellow—my best friend. It is I who——'

"I believe that boy was actually going to declare that he was the thief, but the monstrous falsity of what he was going to say must have been too much for him. He couldn't get it out.

"I think he was incapable of telling a genuine lie. Not that he was so much more righteous than the rest of us. But his extremely frank and honest and open nature must have made the utterance of a whole souled untruth physically repugnant. He tried again:

"'Schoon didn't——' he began, but stopped, looking distinctly nauseated by the vile taste of the skilfully compounded falsehood he wanted to utter in defence of that good friend of his. No, he actually could not blurt out a simple statement to the effect that Schoon didn't do it, and that he, Marston, did. After a moment of humiliated silence he went on.

"I did not see him again until I came on deck soon after midnight. The ship was approaching Algiers.

"Marston came up to me and I was dumfounded to see that he had become his old self. He pressed my arm eagerly and fairly bubbled with anticipation and delight.

"'All these years I've wanted to see these places,' he said with a curiously eager exaltation. 'You can't imagine how I used to flog myself back from one week vacations so that I might save up seven precious days for—this!'

"His hand swept to the land before us. The harbor of Algiers on a warm October night is excessively beautiful. We both stood silent in admiration.

"The great varicolored lights of the boulevard that edges the water burned in a solemn stillness that was not broken by a single whisper of wind; there was a velvety and entrancing blackness about the atmosphere surrounding the ship, which lay with stopped engines motionless before this lighted semi-circle like a huge creature suppliant at an African shrine. So strong was the impression of beauty, silence and mystery that we were for some time oblivious to the shouts of native bumboatmen plying half invisibly about the liner and offering wares.

"The ship anchored and a sea ladder was lowered. A chugging tender came grumpily out to take the passengers ashore. Marston and I descended the sea ladder—it was really a very easy and suitably canvassed staircase. He was a dozen steps ahead of me.

"At the foot of the ladder I saw him stop for a moment, and I stopped too. His gaze was fixed on the black, flowing tide that rippled enticingly against the ship's flank. Then he looked up quickly at the magical city that was the port of his dreams, took the remaining step, stumbled and vanished almost without a splash or a sound in the caressing and mysteriously dark waters of that harbor which are as liquid and gleaming as the hopes, the ambitions and the triumphs of mankind.

"Recovery? No. There was nothing to recover. He must have weighted himself or perhaps something pulled him under. Sharks. Just how deliberate it was I've never been able to decide.

"He had evidently concluded that with no kindred of his own, his life wrecked by a terrible coincidence, he could do no more than quietly withdraw himself from the companionship of men in such a way as to lend as much color as possible to the theory of his guilt. He had had his vision, he had seen Algiers and in his exit he might contrive to do something to aid his best friend whom he was leaving in a situation very much like his own. Yes, it was his idea that his death would close the chapter and by its tacit fastening of the guilt upon himself clear his friend Schoon of the odious suspicion they had shared together.

"Perfectly hopeless. Magnificently futile too. The examination of the forgeries showed conclusively that the theft was Schoon's. It was made more certain by Schoon's failure to return. Escaped out of the country.

"And I sometimes think Schoon must have sedulously arranged things so that his defalcation would coincide with Marston's sailing. Such treachery seems incredible, but it does exist and raises now and then in unexpected places an envenomed fang.

"Later in the course of one of my trips to Honduras I ran across Schoon. We were without an extradition treaty with Honduras then and the colony of exiles there was large. My old chief used to send some one down occasionally to make notes on the fugitives. Although we couldn't bring them back, he thought it just as well to keep tab on them.

"Well, I ran across Schoon in Honduras. He was a fat, flabby, middle aged man and he was running a low gambling house frequented by his fellow exiles. I told him Marston's story and he heard it without a quiver. A reptile! nothing else. After the pitiful and tragic end of his friend the sight of such a creature existing in unclean comfort made me well, bitter. It may not be right to lay it up against the country, but I shall never like Honduras, not as long as I remember the harbor of Algiers."

The police boat Patrol sidled up to Pier 1 and we rose and prepared to go ashore. The water of the harbor flowed black and mysterious against the side of the pier. And all around the horizon there burned steady, vigilant lights as if to illumine a harbor and haven for the weary, the outvantaged and the dreamers of dreams.

QUESTIONING AGAIN: "HAVE ANIMALS SOULS?"

Mrs. Diana Belais, President of the New York Anti-Vivisection Society, Believes That They Have and Discusses Issue Raised Anew by Massachusetts S. P. C. A. Appeal to the Churches

WHETHER or not death ends all with creatures of the lower order is a question that has been raised anew by pamphlets issued by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which desires to obtain more aid from religious bodies in its work.

As old as man himself is this puzzle and yet it becomes new in the light of investigation each year. The statement of Dr. Francis H. Rowley of Boston that the belief in the immortality of beasts is really at the root of all humanitarian work has been widely discussed throughout the country. In the recent investigations of the relations of man to other animals—for it is hard often to tell where man begins and beast ceases to be, where there is mere brute and where a living soul—the belief is strengthened that the kinship between the human race and the orders of animals is greater than scientists have been disposed to admit.

"Evolution," to quote the words of Brierly, "has lowered our pride of exclusiveness. Our boasted reason is not a monopoly. Ants are reasoners. Bees invented the hive. The newly discovered relation is forcing itself into our theology. It troubles it at all points. It is so difficult to define where animal ceases and man begins, why wonder at the difficulty of showing where man ends and God begins?"

To quote from Dr. Rowley, "That there is something in the creatures below us that death does not end has been the conviction of not a few of the world's great and good and wise. Such names as Luther, Wesley, Cowper, Southey, Shelley, Keble, Dean Stanley and Agassiz occur to one as among this number."

"Death removes them from our view," wrote Bishop Butler of the animals. "It destroys the sensible proof which we had of their being possessed with living powers, but does not appear to afford the least reason to believe that they are then or by that event deprived of them."

Darwin regarded it as an "intolerable thought" that these creatures, with all their capacity for devotion, affection, loyalty and suffering, should suffer total annihilation with death.

"There are multitudes," to quote from the pamphlet by Dr. Rowley which was recently reissued in the hope it would result in a series of sermons by Boston clergymen, "to whom this thought is also intolerable. It is incredible to many who have been the recipients, for example, of some dog's unfailing affection, that anything which is so akin to the heart of the universe can be blotted out. It is a part of the things that are best and ought to persist.

"The man or woman who has never associated intimately with these lowly friends will not understand it—cannot understand it. Dogs and horses no more than children open their hearts to those who do not love them.

"Personally I must frankly say, in face of the misery, agony and unrequited patient toil that make up so much of the lives of my lowlier fellow creatures, that unless somehow, somewhere, I believed that there was for these my humble brethren in the universal kinship of life an evening of the scales that deal with the great realities of right and wrong my moral nature would never be at peace."

Mrs. Diana Belais of this city, president of the New York Anti-Vivisection Society, who has given much thought to the rights of the animal creation, is impressed with the belief that there is a hereafter for the four footed friends of man.

"Have animals souls?" she asks. "Must we not say yes? It is gratifying to see that that supreme egotist, man, is beginning generally to admit the possibility, nay, the probability, that our sub-human kin are endowed with that spark called the soul, which he has hitherto arrogated exclusively to himself.

"It is true that some of the greatest minds down the ages have recognized that animals have souls—indeed, that they must have souls, if logic and analogy are accepted in the least as teachers—but these minds have seen the soul in animals by virtue of the greatness of their minds alone. The spiritual intuition of the great poet or philosopher has bridged the chasm of inarticulate speech and seen no reason in this for autocratically denying an individual entity to other animals less developed than ourselves.

"Yet are they entirely less developed than ourselves? What man has ever evidenced love, fidelity, devotion, courage, self-sacrifice, and honor in a higher degree than the dog has shown? And these are ethical and moral qualities. Was all this given them to wither and die with no fruit in the hereafter? Buckner says in his 'Immorality of Animals': 'It is certain that the future life of animals cannot be absolutely denied without impeaching the attributes of God.'

"That we do not understand their language, and thus fail to understand their beings in their completeness, in their individualities, lies with us. That they understand our language and ourselves to an astonishing degree is unquestionable. Does this comprehension of theirs mean nothing? Does their uncanny prevision of men and things mean nothing more than that they are mere lumps of flesh incapable of feeling, as many think, and incapable of reason, as others, equally blind, assert?

"Maeterlinck says that the subconscious mind is as great in animals as in man. Why, then, should we deny a soul to an animal since the main reservoir of his being is the same as our own?

"In short, the 'unity of life,' the 'universal kinship,' the 'oneness of all,' is a tremendous spiritual fact which even our material consciousness has begun to grasp, and in grasping has not only lifted ourselves to a higher plane of apperception and being, but has forced us to a recognition of the higher plane upon which the subhuman animals are set.

"The most ruthless offender toward animals, denying their rights and their immortality, has been the church, which has a painful record and a sad responsibility in connection with our mysterious brothers of the sub-human. The teachings all through the Old and New Testaments show clearly the inculcation of mercy and kindness to animals, as well as their immortality. But, alas, the church, administered by the egotist man, has ruthlessly considered man only, and the cruel neglect of millions upon millions of animal through the centuries rests at the door which is declared to open upon the divine fountain of mercy.

"But a brighter day is dawning. The church, along with humanity, begins to see the light of truer, higher knowledge. Minds are expanding and thinking profoundly. Prejudice against the animal as part of us is weakening, and we perceive that if we, as entities, represent force or energy, and we cannot doubt this, then we must accept the lowlier ones as blood brothers; and, if energy is never lost, if its conservation is invariable, then the same immortality is theirs as ours.

"Pierre Loti says: 'They are frightfully near us.' And we cannot push them away, nor should we try. We belong. The same overspreading, informing and protecting spirit which envelops and develops our own souls envelops and develops theirs. Indeed, there can be but one soul, and they must partake of it, even as we."

Good John Wesley believed that in the Great Beyond he would meet his faithful white horse which had borne him on many a journey in his mission to the souls of men.

The American aborigine counted that he would one day have his beloved animal friends about him in the Happy Hunting Grounds. The chieftains of the bleak European North believed that it was well that their chargers should be buried in the same graves with them so that in Valhalla there would be no question but that they would have beneath them their earthly mounts.

Those who have accepted the entirely materialistic idea of the status of the brute creation demand that first of all it shall be demonstrated to them that man himself has an immortal soul. Seeking light on the future of man, the ancient philosophers took a very broad and liberal view of the future of animals and also of their place in the general scheme of the universe.

The pamphlet of the Massachusetts Humane Society, taking much the same ground as Mrs. Belais maintains that the Christian church has for many centuries practically ignored the claims of the animal world. The church in seeking the salvation of immortal man has neglected, according to this view, the consideration of the beasts which perish. The Brahmin and the Buddhist and the ancient Greeks, on the other hand, saw much reason for believing that animals had souls, and indeed made no distinction between the souls of men and of the sub-human creation.

The Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco writes that two of the early critics of Christianity shared in the idea about the animal world gained from the Oriental and so-called pagan cults. They were Celsus and Porphyry.

"Celsus," says the Countess, "appears to have been inclined toward the theory that the soul, life and mind, only is made from God, while the corruptible body is a natural growth or perhaps the handiwork of inferior spirits. He denied that reason belonged to man alone, and still more strongly that God created the universe for man rather than for the other animals. Only absurd pride, he affirms, can engender such a thought.

"He knew very well that this, being far from a new idea, was the normal view of the ancient world from Aristotle to Cicero. He takes Euripides to task for saying 'the sun and moon are made to serve mankind' Why mankind? Why not ants and flies? Night serves them best for rest and day for seeing and working."

It may be, then, that the church fathers in combating the opponents of their faith may have been unduly led to pass over the importance of all life which was in scale lower than human.

"Here at least," to quote from Dr. Rowley again, "is the fact that for centuries the church remained steadfastly indifferent to the claims of the lower animals and—save for such exceptions as St. Francis of Assisi and the experience of a host of saintly anchorets which gave rise to many a legend of animal intelligence and companionship, and the animal symbols used of Christ, like the lamb, the panther and others—exerted no influence to indicate any just consideration for them.

"Perhaps this ought not to surprise us, for even down to our own day it can hardly be said that the ministry of the Christian Church as a whole sustains any vital relation to the great humane movement. There are splendid exceptions, but to the vast majority of them the care and consideration given to animals seems the work of men or women more or less odd, to say the least. This, at any rate, we are compelled to say as a result of our experience, that entitles us to speak with some degree of assurance—that the pulpit has not been, as an institution, a very serious helper of our humane societies."

These are some of the opinions which have in the last few weeks caused those who are interested in the cause of preventing unnecessary cruelties to animals to make another appeal for the cooperation of the churches.

Mrs. Diana Belais.